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Assessment and Management of Pharmaceuticals and Personal Care Products in the Canadian Environment: Proceedings of a Multi-Stakeholder Workshop

Executive Summary

Recent studies in Europe and the United States have documented the presence of a wide variety of substances contained in pharmaceuticals and personal care products (PPCPs) in the environment. Municipal sewage, agricultural and aquaculture wastes have been identified as sources of PPCPs such as antibiotics, blood lipid regulators, analgesics, anti-inflammatories, antiepileptics, natural and synthetic hormones, fragrances (musks), nonylphenol ethoxylates, disinfectants and antiparasiticides. Many of these substances are designed to target specific biological functions at therapeutic doses. There is mounting evidence that some of these chemicals have the potential to induce adverse health effects in non-target species and possibly humans when exposed to low levels. Effects of concern include disruption of development and reproduction in exposed individuals and their offspring, as well as the enhancement of antibiotic resistant bacteria. There is great uncertainty what the potential long-term human health and ecological health consequences may be resulting from continuous low-level exposure to these substances, especially in sensitive life stages and populations.

Few data are available to characterize the sources, exposure and effects of PPCPs in the Canadian environment. In recognition of the importance of the issue and the federal mandate to protect the health of Canadians and the environment, a scientific workshop entitled *Assessment and Management of Pharmaceuticals and Personal Care Products in the Canadian Environment* was held February 24 to 27, 2002, in Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario. This multi-stakeholder workshop sponsored by Health Canada and Environment Canada provided a forum to discuss PPCPs within a Canadian and international perspective. The main objective of the workshop was to identify major research and risk management needs in Canada. To provide an international multidisciplinary perspective, presentations were made by scientists and regulators from the EU, US and Canada. Invited participants representing industry, government, academia and public interest groups provided a broad spectrum of expertise and perspectives. Informal breakout and round table sessions were designed to promote discussion, identify and prioritize research needs.

The proceedings of the workshop are to be published as a government report as well as in the peer reviewed literature to maximize the distribution of the information. The major conclusions and recommendations from the workshop as well as a tabulated summary of research priorities identified by workshop participants are presented here.

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